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United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott
Eastern District of California

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TWO LARGE-SCALE GROWS UNCOVERED IN CENTRAL VALLEY MARIJUANA ERADICATION EFFORT

Two Separate Cases, Five Persons Indicted, 63,000 Plants

FRESNO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned two indictments yesterday afternoon, charging five men with cultivation of approximately 63,000 marijuana plants in the cities of Sanger and Selma in rural Fresno County.

These cases are the product of investigations conducted by the Fresno County Sheriff's Office Marijuana Suppression Team with assistance from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement and the Fresno County District Attorney's Office.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Marlon Cobar, who is prosecuting the case, in Sanger, PANCHO GARCIA LOPEZ, 28; ULICES MENDOZA GUIZAR, 34; MARIO MENDOZA, 20; and RAMON MENDOZA QUEZA, 32, all of Mexico, are charged with conspiracy to grow, to distribute, and to possess with the intent to distribute 1,000 or more marijuana plants, manufacturing 1,000 or more marijuana plants, and possession of 1,000 or more marijuana plants with the intent to distribute. According to the Fresno County Sheriff's Department, the record seizure in this case totaled approximately 43,000 marijuana plants.

In another case, the grand jury indicted ADAN CRUZ, 27, of Mexico, with manufacturing and possessing with intent to distribute 1,000 or more marijuana plants in Selma,

California. According to the Fresno County Sheriff's Department, the seizure in that case consisted of approximately 20,000 marijuana plants. All defendants will be making their initial appearances in Fresno U.S. District Court over the coming days.

United States Attorney Scott praised the cooperative efforts of the investigators in these cases and commented, "The United States Attorney's Office will continue to work closely with our local, state and federal law enforcement partners to vigorously prosecute large-scale marijuana cultivation in the Central Valley."

The charges each carry a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of ten years and a maximum term of life imprisonment, along with a maximum fine of \$4 million. However, the actual sentence will be imposed at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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